

XIX.—*Note on the Whooper Swans which visit the River Eden in Cumberland.* By THE REV. H. N. HIND.

(Text-figure 15.)

As an instance of wild birds responding to care and attention, where such treatment is afforded them, the following record of some annual visits of Whooper Swans (*Cygnus musicus*) to the city of Carlisle during the past eight years may be of interest to readers of 'The Ibis.'

In December 1904 a Whooper Swan of the year appeared on the River Eden at Carlisle, consorting with the Mute Swans kept by the Corporation of the city. It was first recognised by Mr. D. L. Thorpe, M.B.O.U., and its arrival was soon well known. It became quite tame after a while, and would go to be fed by the park-keeper along with the Mute Swans. It stayed all through the winter, and left on May 8th, 1905.

The bird returned to its winter-quarters at Carlisle on the 16th of November, 1905, and left for its northern home on the 29th of April, 1906. The following winter it returned to Carlisle on the 30th of November, 1906, and it left on the 7th of May, 1907. The bird's next appearance was on February 1st, 1908, this being the latest date of its arrival up to that time. It left again on May 6th, 1908. In 1909 its arrival was later still, namely, on the 28th of February, while it left on April 21st.

The following winter an interesting event happened, for on the 24th of December, 1909, no fewer than four Whoopers appeared, all of them adults.

On their arrival they were very shy, with the exception of the old bird that had come for so many winters. This bird came to be fed as usual, but the other three kept aloof in midstream. By the first week in January 1910, the three newcomers had gained confidence, and swam up to be fed along with the old Whooper and the Mute Swans, and would allow passers-by to walk within four yards of them before they swam away. One pair of this company of four Whoopers

left on the 2nd of April, 1910, the other pair remained at Carlisle for another fortnight.

In the winter of 1910-1911, seven Whoopers arrived at the old haunt at Carlisle on the 16th of November, 1910, and the following day two more came; making nine birds in all.

The herd of seven that arrived on the 16th of November comprised one pair of adults with two cygnets, and one pair of adults with one cygnet. The original bird that had come since 1904 formed one of the latter pair. The two that arrived on the 17th of November were adult birds.

On the 17th of November, however, the pair with the two cygnets flew away; but they returned on the 18th of November with one of the two adults missing. There have been eight Whoopers, therefore, on the Eden at Carlisle, and they have

Text-fig. 15.



Whoopers on the River Eden at Carlisle.

continued there through the winter. They are all quite tame, and do not fear the presence of man. They have been photographed at close quarters repeatedly.

There are one or two characteristics of these Carlisle Whoopers that seem worth placing on record. They have

been known to come within nine feet of a stranger (not the park-keeper) who offered them bread, and this with a dozen people standing by, not a single bird, but five of them together. Such tameness is surely extraordinary in the case of a wild bird of this description.

Again, the Whoopers are quite masters of the Mute Swans. They chase the domesticated birds away in their eagerness to secure a tit-bit. Even the Whooper cygnets can do this. Their antipathy to strange dogs is another marked peculiarity, though they are perfectly friendly with the park-keeper's black retriever, because they know it. On one occasion a warning "Honk-Honk" greeted a collie dog that was galloping along the river bank. The dog ventured into the water, and was promptly chased out of it by the Whoopers. And this is not a solitary instance of their objection to strange dogs.

Three of these birds left Carlisle on Sunday, the 26th of March last. They were adults, and the five that remained comprised two adults and three cygnets. This happens to be the last date of which I have any record.

These particulars are extracted from notes sent to me by Mr. T. L. Johnston, of Carlisle; the photograph was taken by Canon Bower of the same place.

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XX.—*On the Irish Coal-Titmouse* (*Parus hibernicus*).

By W. R. OGILVIE-GRANT, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.

(Plate X.)

THE absence of a proper series of skins of Irish birds has frequently been complained of by those who consult the collection in the Natural History Museum, many species, especially among the Passeres, being either very poorly represented or wanting. For years past I had hoped to make a collecting-trip through Ireland in order to rectify this unsatisfactory state of affairs, but the opportunity for carrying